

What is the community challenge?

In 2018, 11.2 million children in America (15% of children) lived in food-insecure households, and half of these children experienced low or very low food security. These children experience an increased risk for delays in cognitive development and poor physical and mental health. Although the federal nutrition programs are designed to help address food insecurity, a number of them are underutilized and many eligible families face barriers in accessing these programs.

What is the promising solution?

The No Kid Hungry Campaign is a public-private partnership that uses a combination of grants, program development, program promotion, and technical assistance strategies to increase access to and participation in the federal nutrition programs for children of low-income families. The No Kid Hungry model focuses on increasing access to key federal nutrition programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS):

- School Breakfast Program,
- Child and Adult Care Food Program At-Risk Afterschool Meals component, and
- Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option.

What was the purpose of evaluation?

The evaluation of Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaigns by RTI International began in 2015, and data collection ended in 2018. With this program evaluation, the grantee sought to generate a moderate level of evidence, thus increasing the rigor and scale of Share Our Strength's evidence for their No Kid Hungry model approach to reducing child hunger. Two overarching research questions guided the evaluation: 1. *Is the model leading to increased participation in key federal nutrition programs?* and 2. *Is the model leading to decreases in childhood hunger?* Corresponding to the two research questions, the impact evaluation included two quasi-experimental designs (QED) to measure the effects of the No Kid Hungry intervention. QED 1 used population-level administrative data from state agencies and national sociodemographic data to compare rates of participation in federal nutrition programs in Share Our Strength subgrantee intervention areas to non-intervention areas. QED 2 used interviews with independent random samples of families from three intervention elementary schools and three matched control elementary schools to compare children's baseline (September 2016–May 2017) and follow-up (October–December 2018) food security, increased consumption, and improved nutrition. Two hundred forty-eight students and their caregivers participated at baseline, 229 at follow-up, and of these, 24 completed both time points.

What did the evaluation find?

As a grantee of CNCS's Social Innovation Fund, Share Our Strength engaged an independent evaluator to implement an impact evaluation of the No Kid Hungry Campaigns. The evaluation included an implementation study to observe how the program was implemented and operated and an impact study to determine the impact of the model on program participants. The Impact Study found:

- *Participation in key federal nutrition programs:* the results of QED1 suggest that participation in the school breakfast program among free or reduced price (FRP) eligible students improved between the school years 2014–2015 and

Program At-a-Glance

CNCS Program: Social Innovation Fund

Intervention: No Kid Hungry Campaigns

Subgrantees: Florida Impact, Hunger Task Force (WI), United Way of King County (WA), Texas Hunger Initiative, Three Square Food Bank (NV), United Way for Southeastern Michigan

Intermediary: Share Our Strength

Focus Area(s): Healthy Futures

Focus Populations: School-aged (K-12) children/adolescents as well as a subpopulation of elementary school children and their families

Communities Served: Wisconsin; Florida; Texas; King County, WA; Clark County, NV; Counties of Southeastern MI

2017–2018 across all combined target areas in all states; by contrast, participation in school breakfast programs decreased or improved less than in target areas over the same time in all states except Michigan. Improvements in participation in afterschool meals and snacks programs were seen in Nevada and, to a lesser extent, Florida, and these increases were in contrast to steep declines in participation in non-target areas in those states.

Improvements in participation in summer meals in Nevada and, to a much lesser extent, Washington were observed over the same implementation period across all combined target areas, in contrast to decreases in the non-target areas in those states. School type (e.g., elementary) and school need (e.g., high FRP eligibility) were the most dependable descriptors of participation rates for FRP school meals programs in intervention areas.

- *Childhood hunger*: the results of QED2 showed that there were no significant differences between the intervention and comparison group results related to food security. The treatment group had significantly improved indicators of meal and snack consumption, and consumed healthier foods compared with the control group.

Notes on the evaluation

Findings from QED 1 suggest that participation in federal nutrition programs increased in No Kid Hungry intervention areas. For QED2, the design powered detection of statistically significant differences, assuming a confidence level of 0.05, of effect sizes around 0.3 and above, which is considered between a small effect size (0.2) and a moderate (0.5) effect size. The evaluation did not demonstrate an effect of the intervention model with a confidence level of 0.05 and effect sizes of 0.03 or greater. Most effect sizes comparing results from baseline to follow up had an effect size well below 0.3.

How is Share Our Strength using the evaluation findings to improve?

The subgrantees participating in the evaluation report lessons learned that reflect their efforts to engage schools, leverage partnerships, tailor campaign strategies, identify effective staff characteristics, increase their public profile, and increase awareness of campaign activities. Specific lessons learned that may be implemented in future campaigns include:

- Identifying champions to facilitate implementation of effective school breakfast and afterschool meals and snacks models.
- Tailoring technical assistance to the needs of specific schools to maximize impact and develop a strong partnership between the subgrantee and school.
- Hiring campaign staff who can build strong positive relationships with local school districts to facilitate cooperation.
- Building up a reputation in the community as an organization addressing childhood hunger to increase campaign awareness and effectiveness.

The content of this brief was drawn from the full evaluation report submitted to CNCS by the grantee/subgrantee. The section of the brief that discusses evaluation use includes contribution of the grantee/subgrantee. All original content from the report is attributable to its authors.

To access the full evaluation report and learn more about CNCS, please visit nationalservice.gov/research.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), combines public and private resources to grow the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the U.S. The SIF invests in three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.